

Title: Charger of the Fallen

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I don't hold with
the overblown, self
congratulatory
boasting of
adventurers. I find
them lacking the facts,
the substance, that
prove a compelling read.

So why, you might ask
gentile reader, have I
rendered my thoughts
in this same medium?
Having expressed my
disdain for the dubious
tales of others, this
must seem hypocritical
or self indulgent.

I have little defence,
save that posterity
must have a record of
this discovery and I
am the only one who has
the knowledge, and can
tell the tale. As I am
a retiring person, not
prone to boisterous
revels or even the
presence of others save
the closest of friends,
I set out alone. I had
no particular destination
in mind and it was after
weeks of wandering that
I encountered the most
marvelous sight.

You must understand,
I was in a mountainous
area, surrounded on all
sides by majestic snow
capped peaks. The air was
crisp and refreshing and
a pleasant stream burbled
past. I decided to refill
my drinking skins from
the cool water flowing
by, and it was then that

I made my first startling discovery. The water was black!

No, I know what you're thinking, the water must have been very deep, or the stones themselves black. But this was no illusion, the water was no deeper than a foot and the liquid a silky black color quite unlike the normal clarity one sees. I was mystified, of course. What could cause one of the most basic elements of life to change in such a manner? What might this portend?

As I mused over the implications, I was startled from my reverie by a noise, not unlike the snorting of a bull. Imagine my amazement when i turned to see what might have crept upon me and beheld a jet steed of such noble proportions that i felt I must be gazing upon the paragon of horses. From the proud arch of the neck to the powerful of muscles just under the skin, this equine shown with unmistakable magic. Unconcerned with my presence, the lordly creature drank calmly from the strange water. With each gulp of liquid, the stallion's coat dulled and became thicker, coarser. The glorious cascade of mane darkened till even the word pitch cannot describe the utter absence of color. I was witnessing a transformation that I feared harmed this this magnificent beast, and so I took the only action that seemed

reasonable at the time.

I yelled, I screamed,
I shouted... I shoved
against the creatures
mighty body trying to
force it away from the
tainted water. But, alas,
to no avail. Once, the
equine turned and gazed
upon me with bright,
intelligent eyes, before
returning to quench its
mighty thirst. In horror,
I stood transfixed as
the final
metamorphosis took place.
And then, abruptly, I
knew nothing more.

I Awoke, bound roughly
and lying on my side.
I was clearly the cause
of an argument between
several people, who
could only be my captors.
My head pounding and the
blood thrumming painfully
in my bound limbs.
I strained to hear the
conversation. I
overheard just enough
to become very afraid.
For you see, gentle
readers, these people
who call themselves
the Cult of the Fallen
are servants of Mondain.
Though dead, the
legacy of the wizard
lives on in the minds of
his followers. They
work for vengeance alone,
for the corruption of
Sosaria and the
destruction of all who
stand against them.

I escaped, as you
surely have devined, for
how else could i give
warning? The story of my
flight is not important
and so i will not waste